

The resilience of the Warsaw metropolis to future migration inflows in the opinion of local government authorities

Abstract

The main goal of this article is to assess whether the Warsaw metropolis is prepared for possible future large inflows of immigrants in the reception stage. As a result of the Russian attack on Ukraine (24.02.2022), about 350,000 forced migrants¹ arrived in Warsaw in the first weeks. The article presents the results of a quantitative online survey conducted among representatives from local municipalities from the Warsaw metropolis. The study addressed issues related to elements of the infrastructure and socio-economic system that enable the reception of this influx of forced migrants. The results obtained point towards a positive correlation between the experience gained during the reception period and the preparedness for future large inflows of immigrants. In some cases, especially for services that are financially demanding, there is a gap that indicates low preparedness despite having provided this kind of support before. The study did not confirm better preparedness for future immigration among the larger urban centres within the Warsaw metropolis.

Keywords

Urban resilience • migrations • forced migrants • refugees • Warsaw metropolis

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Introduction

This article addresses the issue of urban resilience in the context of migration. Its key question is: How is the Warsaw Metropolis prepared for possible future large inflows of immigrants? We analyse this from the perspective of one of the many relevant stakeholders, namely the local government, drawing on the experience of the municipalities of the Warsaw metropolis during the phase of receiving forced migrants after the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine after 24 February 2022. We would also like to point out the peculiarities of the capital region, which consists of the capital and a number of independent but functionally interconnected municipalities, which might be prepared to varying degrees to receive forced migrants in large numbers and in a short time. The inclusion of independent but functionally connected “ring” municipalities in studies on immigration appears to be a research gap.

The reception of the increased influx of forced migrants in early 2022 proved to be an important event for the city and a test of the efficiency, flexibility and resilience of its many systems. Researchers point out that the city's success in this test is largely due to the participation of civil society (Baszczak et al. 2022; Jarosz & Klaus 2023; Mixed Migration Centre 2023; Fomina & Pachocka 2024). Despite this mobilization, the influx of numerous immigrant

groups has not been without impact on the city's resilience (Kirbyshire et al. 2017; World Bank 2018).

The topic of resilience in the geographic and social sciences began to be actively developed in the 1970s. For example, Holling (1973, p. 14) defined resilience as “a measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables”. The European Commission, in the same vein, treats resilience as “the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks” (COM 2012, p. 5), suggesting that resilience can be considered at different spatial and organizational levels.

In the literature, we find several main characteristics of a resilient city: it has a threat resilient infrastructure (e.g. Sienkiewicz-Maljurek 2020; Bilska 2016); it includes risks and threats in its spatial planning and design (e.g. Xuefeng Z et al. 2018); it has flexible and adaptable systems (e.g. Mierzejewska et al. 2020; Masik & Grabkowska 2020; The City Resilience Profiling Tool 2018); it has developed crisis management and communication systems for a crisis (e.g. Tocicka 2020); it involves residents in the process of city design and management (e.g. Prasad et al. 2009; Baraniewicz-Kotasińska 2023; Adil & Audirac 2020; Council of Europe 2021; Seethaler-Wari 2018) and it uses networks and partnerships in the resilience-building process (e.g. Kapucu et al. 2021).

Zapata-Barrero (2023) uses and promotes the concept of urban resilience in migration research. He notes that this combination is useful and enriching for both fields of research and points out that capacity-building in the context of migration requires a holistic and agency-orientated approach (Zapata-Barrero 2023).

The existing literature defines the preparedness for the arrival of migrants as the initial ability to provide “food, water,

¹In this article, we focus on the reception of migrants fleeing Ukraine after the Russian attack and the outbreak of war on 24 February 2022. According to the literature, it is not correct to use the term “refugees” (Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk 2022); however, the term “forced migrants” is commonly used in relation to this group (Wach & Pachocka 2022; Szalc et al. 2023; Łukasiewicz et al. 2024; Staniszwski 2023). As we also refer to other experiences of receiving numerous groups of migrants, as described in the literature, the terms “immigrants” or “refugees” are also used in this article. We refer to preparedness for “increased migration inflow” in the future, the nature of which we cannot predict. The data on the first weeks of increased inflow of forced migrants comes from Warsaw City Hall (2024).

sanitation and shelter” (Ogata 1995, p. 3; see also UNHCR 2023) and to ensure access to healthcare (Kocot & Szetela 2020; WHO 2020), education (Hossain 2021), the labour market (Soltész 2021), but sometimes also to psychosocial support (UNHCR 2023). Another important factor is the readiness of local authorities to manage migration and the participation of local residents in planning and implementing integration strategies (UNHCR 2016; Seethaler-Wari 2018; Schemschat 2024; Goniewicz 2022). Still, there are relatively few studies that identify specific factors related to urban resilience and its sources (The City Resilience Profiling Tool 2018; Arup 2018). The City Resilience Framework Tool, developed by the Resilient Cities Network and Arup with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation (2015), offers a comprehensive approach to urban resilience. It contains four dimensions with twelve drivers and is used to assess the resilience of cities. Kirbyshire et al. (2017) built on this tool by identifying “the aspects of the system that are most affected by a rapid influx of displaced people: 1) adequate shelter, health care and protection; 2) provision of basic services; 3) economic development and employment; and 4) social and political inclusion and community cohesion” (Kirbyshire et al. 2017, p. 11).

The above-mentioned aspects of the system can be understood as needs that vary in importance according to the immigration phase. While the first two are the most important in the reception phase, the other two relate mainly to the integration phase. Immigration phases that can be found in the literature are usually admission, reception and integration (Sobczak-Szelc et al. 2023) or aid, reception and integration (Jarosz & Klaus 2023). It is also argued that it is useful to analyse the reception and integration stages together (Pędziwiatr & Magdziarz 2022; White Paper 2022). In this article, we focus on the specific needs of the reception phase when taking in a large influx of forced migrants, which Jarosz & Klaus define as “welcoming refugees”, or “humanitarian, emergency, rather short-term assistance, meeting basic needs” (2023, p. 4).

In the case of an increased influx of large numbers of migrants, urban resilience requires multi-level governance that involves both central and regional governments as well as local authorities to implement response measures (Seethaler-Wari 2018); these stakeholders become active and innovative creators, sometimes acting against the upper levels of state administration (Zapata-Barrero 2023). In our study, we therefore also look at the relationships that local governments maintain with other levels of government and with social and private actors.

As one of the main destinations of forced migrants after the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine, Warsaw has attracted much attention in migration research (Jarosz & Klaus 2023; Homel et al. 2023; Wach & Pachocka 2022), but it should be borne in mind that the functionally interconnected metropolis of Warsaw comprises not only the capital but also other municipalities that experience the influx of forced migrants. In the case of a single city and its local authorities, we can speak of a compact territory governed by one local policy and integrated into the national system. In the Warsaw metropolis, the resilience of the city is influenced by the relationships between different local actors (Perry 2010; Płoszaj 2013) and the individual municipalities’ ability to receive forced migrants. At the same time, a metropolis, consisting of numerous separate local administrative units, is a more complex organizational entity that requires additional coordination of local policy activities.⁵ The Warsaw metropolis is not managed by a

metropolitan council; it is an entity whose controllability at the metropolitan level is limited and depends on the effectiveness of cooperation between the local units that make up this metropolis (Lackowska-Madurowicz 2012). This justifies the attempt to diagnose the resilience of the individual municipalities of the Warsaw metropolis when receiving forced migrants and its preparedness for increased migration inflow in the future.

Despite the rising number of immigrants and the increasing presence of foreign-born populations in Polish cities, Poland is still categorized as a New Immigration Destinations (NID) (Pędziwiatr & Magdziarz 2022). According to Eurostat data for 2023, the share of the foreign-born population in Poland is around 3%, while the share in countries such as Germany, France, Belgium or the Netherlands is 20%, 13%, 19% and 16%, respectively (Eurostat n.d.).

Forced migrants more often choose to settle in cities because of the large and receptive labour markets, education and transport opportunities, among other things (Matuszczyk 2022; Sobczak-Szelc et al. 2023; Jarosz & Klaus 2023). At the same time, migration policy is increasingly being shaped by cities at the local level, taking the “people-in-places” approach (Matusz Protasiewicz 2013; World Bank 2018; Soltész 2021), which is also referred to as a “local turn” (Zapata-Barrero 2023). This is more evident in large European cities with a long tradition of immigration but can be noticed also in Poland’s largest cities (Gońda et al. 2020; Klaus et al. 2020; Wach & Pachocka 2022).

Warsaw was already the “place of residence of the most numerous migrant community” in Poland before February 2022 (Homel et al. 2023, p. 2). Ukrainian citizens already comprised 54% of the foreign workforce in Warsaw prior to the war (Statistics Poland 2022). In the year following the onset of the war, “over 1.1 million forced migrants from Ukraine have passed through Warsaw. During the initial days of the conflict, as many as 40,000 individuals per day sought assistance” (Warsaw City Hall 2023). As of July 2024, there are over 181,500 Ukrainian citizens in Warsaw with a PESEL number (national identification number), including nearly 108,000 who have been granted a special temporary protection status for Ukrainians who arrived after 24 February 2022 (called UKR status) (Warsaw City Hall 2024).

As Łukasiewicz et al. (2024) diagnose (based on experiences of various Polish cities), local authorities face the following challenges when receiving forced migrants: cooperation between the municipality and the non-governmental sector and migrant associations, continuous acquisition of knowledge and information, coordination of various activities at different levels of actors, stable funding of services for migrants, multidimensional availability of public services and targeted measures. In this context, they note that the allocation of resources, capital and competences are crucial (Łukasiewicz et al. 2024, p. 8). At the same time, it can be assumed that large cities such as Warsaw, as larger units, have more and higher quality resources at their disposal to respond to the increased influx of forced migrants (Benedek et al. 2019; Dąbrowska & Łukomska 2011; Jarosz & Klaus 2023).

The authors of the report “The Polish School of Assistance. Reception of Refugees from Ukraine in Poland in 2022”, whose study also takes into account the division into a reception and an integration phase, point to a particular problem related to the coordination of activities in the first hours and days of reception of forced migrants after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, which often led to a waste of resources (Jarosz & Klaus 2023). Among other things, they point to the need for better cooperation between sectors, access to services, support for NGOs and flow of information (Jarosz & Klaus 2023), which is in line with the recommendations

⁵Poland has a three-tier administrative division, separated into voivodeships, powiaty and gminas. The Warsaw metropolitan area comprises powiaty and gminas in the NUTS 2 unit, defined as the “Warsaw Capital Region” (Read more: Stowarzyszenie “Metropolia Warszawa” n.d.; Statistics Poland n.d.). NUTS refers to a common classification of territorial units for statistics, introduced by the European Union. Its aim is to facilitate the collection, development and publication of harmonized regional statistics in the EU. The NUTS classification has a hierarchical structure and divides

each Member State into three levels: NUTS 1, NUTS 2 and NUTS 3. The NUTS 2 level is typically a region that has between 800,000 and three million inhabitants (European Parliament n.d.).

of the Centre for Migration Research (Łukasiewicz et al. 2024). The problem of access to language courses and accommodation is also increasingly recognized and researched (Sobczak-Szelc et al. 2023).

Our study aims to identify the experiences and points of view of local authorities in the Warsaw metropolis in connection with the reception phase of forced migrant inflow after 24 February 2022.

Hypotheses

The study conducted aimed to test the following hypotheses relating to the opinions of the representatives of local authorities:

H1. In order to accommodate the influx of forced migrants from Ukraine, the municipalities of the Warsaw metropolis have acted in the areas where they have the greatest competence. This hypothesis refers to the effectiveness of managing internal resources and of acting according to municipalities' own resources (Baraniewicz-Kotasińska 2023; EEA Technical report 2015).

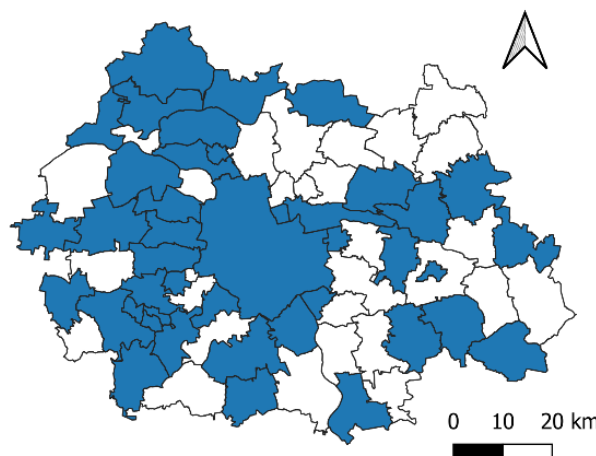
H2. Large urban centres within the Warsaw metropolis are best prepared to receive forced migrants and increased inflow of migrants. The Warsaw metropolis consists of 15 cities, 19 urban-rural municipalities and 36 rural municipalities. In the literature on this topic, cities are often associated with growth poles due to their economic and social potential (Benedek et al. 2019; Dąbrowska & Łukomska 2011; Gao et al. 2022) and have the potential to mobilize all urban resources to address a large and sudden inflow of forced migrants (Jarosz & Klaus 2023).

Methodology and research area

To test the hypotheses, a quantitative computer assisted web interview (CAWI) survey was designed, targeting representatives of municipalities that belong to the Warsaw metropolis. The invitation to the survey was sent to all local governments that shape the Warsaw metropolis and are united in the Warsaw Metropolis Association. Territorially, the study area corresponds to the NUTS 2 region ("Warsaw Capital Subregion") and is composed of a total of 70 municipalities (local government units). Among the representatives, presidents, mayors and heads of municipalities were invited to participate. Their task was to answer questions about the territorial unit they represented in terms of receiving forced migrants and their preparedness for future immigration. Each municipality could respond to the survey only once; however, collective contributions could be made, allowing many officials involved in the topic to inform the responses in order to achieve the most comprehensive results. Thus, non-probability sampling and deliberate sampling were used, where it was determined in advance who the respondent would be (Bhardwaj 2019). The survey was conducted from 20 March to 25 May 2023. From 70 municipalities, a total of 41 surveys were completed, representing 58.6% of the studied population of municipalities (Map 1).

The survey prepared was based on the scientific literature and personal discussions with representatives from the local authorities. Before distribution via email, the survey was tested in a pilot study involving people who work in local governments. It consisted of ten questions. Seven of them were analysed for the purposes of this article (see appendix); there was one open-ended question about the municipality represented, three closed single-answer questions and three questions in the form of a grid – namely, tables in which the columns contain possible answers that the respondent uses to refer to the issues included in the following lines. A grid question "decreases the perceived questionnaire length and harmonizes the context of questions" (Heerwegh 2009 in: Silber et al. 2017, p. 2). The questions about the activities carried out by the municipality in relation to the reception of forced migrants and the preparation for these tasks

in the future are directly related to the first hypothesis, which refers to the activities in the areas in which the municipality is best prepared or has the most resources. They concern the reception phase and were selected and concretized based on the pilot study and interviews with local government representatives. The second hypothesis, which relates to the assumed greater potential and better preparation of large municipalities, was to be tested by comparing the results across the size of the municipality. To further analyse and interpret the results, questions were asked about the preparation factors for future immigration at the level of the individual municipality and the Warsaw metropolitan region as a whole.



Map 1. Warsaw metropolis (municipalities that participated in the survey are marked in colour)

Source: own elaboration based on received surveys

Although the sample size of 41 municipalities may seem small, it represents three-fifths of all 70 municipalities in the Warsaw metropolitan area. The sample includes the capital city of Warsaw and municipalities from all nine *poviats* forming the Warsaw metropolitan area. The analysed municipalities account for 81% of the inhabitants and 62% of the area of the entire metropolitan area of Warsaw. The obtained sample structure does not differ significantly from the structure of the entire metropolitan area in terms of population or type of municipality (Table 1). It should be recalled that in statistical analyses of small populations, as in this case, a finite population correction is applied, which makes the expected sample size smaller (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018). As a special precaution, the scope of the analyses remains basic and the results presented in the tables include counts. An "action index" and a "preparation index" were also developed, and Spearman correlation was used to examine their relationships.⁶ The data were processed with the solution PS IMAGO PRO, whose analysis engine is IBM SPSS Statistics.

Results

The comparison of actions taken by local governments during the reception phase of the first inflow of forced migrants from Ukraine (2022), with the assessment of their preparedness

⁶Indicators were created by assigning points to actions taken towards refugees (20 possible actions): "Yes": 4 points, "Yes, but they were difficult to implement": 2 points, "No": 0 points. Preparation for undertaking actions was also evaluated (20 possible actions): "very bad": 0 points, "bad": 0 points, "neither good nor bad": 2 points, "good": 3 points, "very good": 4 points. The maximum score for both indicators was 80 points.

Table 1. Structure of municipalities participating in the study (n)

Type of municipality	n	Number of municipalities in the Warsaw metropolitan area
Urban	9	15
Urban–rural	12	24
Rural	20	31
Population of municipality		
below 7,000 inhabitants	9	14
7,001–15,000 inhabitants	11	17
15,001–26,000 inhabitants	13	21
above 26,000 inhabitants	8	18
Level of experience in receiving immigrants		
Very high	2	
High	21	
Rather low	15	
No experience	1	
Hard to say	2	
Maximum potential number of immigrants		
Up to 500	35	
501–1,000	4	
1,001–5,000	1	
More than 20,000	1	

N=41. Source: own elaboration based on received surveys

for these actions (Table 2), leads to the following conclusions:

- Among the measures taken by almost all surveyed local governments (more than 90% of surveyed municipalities), the most common is information support, slightly less frequently are material and financial support, and provision of places in schools and kindergartens. Among the least common forms of assistance are the provision of housing for permanent residence and the provision of jobs (no more than a half of municipalities). Thus, the most common assistance provided is of an intermediary nature or related to legal regulations (e.g. compulsory education). It can also be noted that in terms of education in the broadest sense – both in terms of school places and language learning – local authorities feel well prepared to provide support. Nevertheless, the researchers point to the need for support in the form of intercultural assistants and preparatory classes in order to facilitate further stages of forced migrant reception (Sobczak-Szelc et al. 2023).

- If the number of immigrants continues to increase, local governments are less likely to declare that they are well and very well prepared to carry out these activities. This means that some local governments, although they have provided certain forms of support after February 2022, are critical of their ability to support forced migrants further. Again, information activities and material assistance are among the most frequently listed activities for which local governments feel well prepared;
- The greatest discrepancy between actions taken and preparedness for these actions is in temporary housing assistance and the provision of financial assistance; these forms of assistance are related to access to resources, which are inherently limited, and are the activities whose costs are the highest. From the perspective of local authorities in the Warsaw metropolitan area, of the three areas defined as priorities – resources, capital and competences (Łukasiewicz et al. 2024, p. 8) – resources and capital are the most deficient. In contrast, for the registration of forced migrants, provision of legal assistance, and assistance in establishing contacts with other Ukrainians, the “skills gap” is definitely low. From this, the tentative finding can be derived that of the three key areas mentioned above, resources and capital decrease with increasing support, while the competence dimension improves or remains strong. However, the largest “gap” in the provision of temporary accommodation should be a cause for concern, as this is claimed to be the key challenge (Duszczek & Kaczmarczyk 2022) and the research shows the negative impact of substandard accommodation on the adaptation and psychological well-being of forced migrants (Sobczak-Szelc et al. 2023).

The analysis of the interdependence of the number of activities performed and the preparation for these activities shows a high degree of correlation (Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is 0.549 with a significance level of <.001). The municipalities that have more experience in receiving forced migrants from Ukraine feel better prepared for future activities related to the reception of immigrants.

Analysis of responses obtained by urban, urban–rural and rural centres, as well as by different size classes of cities, revealed no statistically significant dependencies. This means that the relationship between their experience and the municipalities' sense of preparedness for increased migration inflow in the future depends on factors other than population size or type of community in the case of the Warsaw metropolis municipalities. The observed lack of interdependence may be attributable only to the municipalities of the Warsaw metropolitan area, which are functionally interconnected and characterized by relatively easy movement of people and services.

Among the measures that will have the greatest impact on the absorption of future inflows of migration, local government representatives most frequently point to those related to organization (clear division of tasks in crisis situations between government, local governments and NGOs) and resources (increasing public housing stock, limiting existing systemic problems that are not due to migration) (Table 3). This is largely in line with the observations and recommendations made by Jarosz & Klaus (2023) and Łukasiewicz et al. (2024) for the reception phase. Cooperation with NGOs is frequently mentioned by local government representatives but educational and social activities are less important in their opinion.

Also, among the factors that have the greatest impact on the situation of the entire Warsaw metropolis in the face of increased migration in the future, the surveyed municipalities' representatives mention the following key factors: the financial

Table 2. Activities undertaken by local governments and their preparation to carry out these activities

	Yes, we did it	Good and very good preparation	Gap
	Number of responses		
Information support	41	34	7
Provision of in-kind services (food, clothing)	39	31	8
Registration of refugees	32	31	1
Provision of places in schools	39	30	9
Learning Polish	32	26	6
Provision of places in kindergartens	38	25	13
Help with acclimatization in Poland	28	25	3
Help in making contact with other Ukrainians	27	25	2
Legalizing stay	27	24	3
Psychological support	31	23	8
Medical assistance	32	23	9
Legal support	23	21	2
Financial support	38	20	18
Assistance in finding a job	32	19	13
Help with translating documents proving qualifications (education, work experience)	25	19	6
Help in establishing contact with Polish families	29	18	11
Provision of nursery places	21	15	6
Provision of temporary accommodation	36	14	22
Sharing of workplaces	18	8	10
Provision of accommodation for a permanent stay	10	3	7

N=41. Source: own elaboration based on received surveys. In the question about undertaking activities, the respondents could answer: "Yes," "Yes, but they were difficult to implement", "No", "I don't know".

resources of local governments and legal regulations at the central level. The activities of non-governmental organizations, volunteers, and the private sector are, in their opinion, of relatively minor importance.

Discussion

The results obtained in the study fit not only into the discussion on the resilience of cities and metropolitan areas

Table 3. On what the ability of municipalities to absorb future migration inflows will depend (total answers: "To a large extent" and "To a very large extent")

Potential actions:	Number of respondents who chose this answer
Clear division of responsibilities in the crisis between government, local governments and NGOs	22
Increase in the public housing stock	20
Reduction in existing systemic problems not resulting from migration waves (e.g. related to education, health care, expansion/modernization of basic infrastructure, etc.)	19
Cooperation of local government with non-governmental organizations	17
Cooperation between local governments	16
Increase in the reception capacity of educational and care institutions	16
Ensuring information security	16
Acquisition of crisis management skills among decision-makers	15
Inclusion of refugees in Polish systems: population registration, taxation, health services, education, etc.	15
Creation of action plans in the event of future migration waves	12
Education of Polish society about respect for other nations	12
Cooperation with international organizations and other countries (e.g. partner municipalities)	11
Support for business and entrepreneurship development	10
Development of public transportation	8
Reduction in tensions and conflicts at the local level	8
Enrichment of social and cultural offer for migrants/new residents	7
Development of data collection and analysis systems (e.g. related to flows, infrastructure, space use)	6
Creation of land reserves for investments for possible migrant collection points	4

N=41. Source: own elaboration based on received surveys.

but also on their management in the context of large inflows of immigrants (e.g. Kardel 2022). It should be emphasized that the influx of forced migrants from Ukraine caused different impacts and different actions at the local level than the previous crises of 2008 (financial crisis) and 2020 (pandemic) (see Dębkowska et al. 2020; De Coninck 2023).

Table 4. Factors that will have the greatest positive impact on the preparation of the Warsaw metropolis for future inflows of immigrants (Question with multiple answer options)

Factors:	Number of respondents who chose this answer
Financial strength of local governments	27
Legislative actions of the government	23
Financial support from the European Union	21
Organizational activities and coordination of activities at the central level	13
Organizational activities and coordination of activities at the local level	12
Activity of citizens and society	12
Organizational activities and coordination of activities at the voivodeship government level	8
Activity of local non-governmental organizations	6
Volunteer activity	6
Activity of large domestic non-governmental organizations	2
Support and cooperation from the private sector	1

N=41. Source: own elaboration based on received surveys

The positive testing of the first hypothesis is only partially possible. On the one hand, there is a statistically significant correlation between the number of actions taken and the degree of preparation for actions in the face of future inflows of immigrants. We could assume that the local governments have indeed often carried out activities for which they were well prepared (e.g. registration of forced migrants) but this may also indicate the relevance of the experience, which positively influences the preparedness of municipalities in the future. On the other hand, there are several activities (financial support and provision of emergency shelters) where we observe a large “skills gap”. Given the increasing financial weakness of municipalities in Poland (Surówka & Bień 2024), municipalities in the Warsaw metropolis, the most developed area in Poland, also point to problems with the financial aspect of assistance. However, we note that of the three key areas – resources, capital and competences (Łukasiewicz et al. 2024) – the first two seem to be shrinking, while the latter remains high. Whether and to what extent there can be a mutual substitution between these resources remains an open question and needs to be investigated further.

The second hypothesis, which assumed a relationship between preparation for the migration influx and the type of municipality (urban, urban–rural, rural), was not statistically confirmed. This could result from the fact that local administrations are strongly subordinated to central activities (e.g. financially and legally), which partially eliminates the level of differentiation between municipalities in readiness to accept immigrants. Another possible reason for the negative verification of the hypothesis is that all municipalities belong to the Warsaw metropolitan area and remain under strong mutual influence, which leads to an increase in the level of human and social capital; therefore, the administrative categories, such as the type or size of the municipality, are less important than other factors.

Of the many actors of strategic importance to the reception of an increased inflow of migrants, we have focused on local governments as cities play an increasingly important role in shaping migration policy and are best placed to respond to a large and sudden influx of migrants (World Bank 2018; Soltész 2021; Gońda et al. 2020; Klaus et al. 2020; Wach & Pachocka 2022). Such an influx represents both great potential and a challenge for the resilience of cities (Kirbyshire et al. 2017). At the same time, the ring municipalities of the immigration destinations have, so far, often been overlooked in research. Although studies point to a major problem in coordinating activities in the reception phase of forced migrants from Ukraine (Pędziwiatr & Magdziarz 2022; Jarosz & Klaus 2023), the study shows that the municipalities of the Warsaw metropolitan area estimate the organizational and competence-related capabilities to be relatively high after this experience. Perhaps a special metropolitan law would also reinforce urban resilience, building on the experience and helping municipalities to have more agency in the reception phase in the future. Certainly, lessons learned should be translated into best practices as much as possible in the future. On the other hand, competence might be no substitute for resources such as housing stock, and this is where we see the biggest gap that the self-government level is unlikely to be able to address alone. Moreover, it may no longer be able to rely as much on civil society (Mixed Migration Centre 2023; Fomina & Pachocka 2024). It is in this area that we see the greatest threat to the urban resilience of the Warsaw metropolitan area.

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Appendix 1 Survey questions that were included in the analyses presented in the article⁴

1. Please enter the name of your municipality (open-ended)
2. How can you best describe your organization's experience in relations with immigrants? By experience in relations with immigrants, we mean primarily providing them with assistance in living, social, formal and other matters. (Please select one answer.)
 - Very high level of experience
 - High level of experience
 - Rather low level of experience
 - No experience
 - Hard to say
3. Were the following activities to support Ukrainians carried out in your municipality in 2022? This applies to all activities undertaken in your municipality, not only those carried out by your organization. (Grid question.)

The answers:

- Yes
- Yes, but they were difficult to implement
- No
- I don't know

The Items:

- Registration of refugees
 - Legalizing stay
 - Provision of nursery places
 - Provision of places in kindergartens
 - Provision of places in schools
 - Medical assistance
 - Psychological support
 - Financial support
 - Information support
 - Provision of temporary accommodation
 - Provision of accommodation for a permanent stay
 - Assistance in finding a job
 - Sharing of workplaces
 - Help in making contact with other Ukrainians
 - Help in establishing contacts with Polish families
 - Provision of in-kind services (food, clothing)
 - Learning Polish
 - Legal support
 - Help with translating documents proving qualifications (education, work experience)
 - Help with acclimatization in Poland
4. How do you assess the level of preparedness of your municipality for a potential further increase in the number of immigrants/refugees in terms of the following activities?

Answers:

- Very bad
- Bad
- Neither good nor bad
- Good
- Very good
- Hard to say

Items: (as in the previous question)

5. Thinking about the future, how many potential immigrants from abroad can your municipality accept in the next two years? It is about the maximum number of immigrants from abroad that your municipality can accept and still function well. (Please select one answer.)
 - Up to 500
 - 501–1,000
 - 1,001–5,000
 - 5,001–10,000
 - 10,001–20,000
 - over 20,000
6. To what extent will the ability of your municipality to absorb future immigration waves depend on the following activities?

⁴Based on the pilot project and previous interviews, we use language in the questionnaire that is as natural and understandable as possible for the respondents. For example, we speak of "refugees" when we talk about migrants coming from Ukraine after the outbreak of the full-blown war in 2022. When we refer to the future influx of a large number of migrants without knowing the possible nature of this migration, we use the term "future waves of immigration" or "increase in the number of immigrants from abroad".

Answers:

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- To a significant extent
- To a large extent
- To a very large extent
- Hard to say

Items:

- Creation of land reserves for investments for possible migrant collection points
 - Creation of action plans in the event of future migration waves
 - Cooperation with international organizations and other countries (e.g. partner municipalities)
 - Cooperation between local governments
 - Cooperation of local government with non-governmental organizations
 - Increase in the public housing stock
 - Acquisition of crisis management skills among decision-makers
 - Reduction in existing systemic problems not resulting from migration waves (e.g. related to education, health care, expansion/modernization of basic infrastructure, etc.)
 - Development of public transportation
 - Development of data collection and analysis systems (e.g. related to flows, infrastructure, space use)
 - Education of Polish society about respect for other nations
 - Inclusion of refugees in Polish systems: population registration, taxation, health services, education, etc.
 - Support for business and entrepreneurship development
 - Increase in the reception capacity of educational and care institutions
 - Reduction in tensions and conflicts at the local level
 - Enrichment of social and cultural offer for migrants/new residents
 - Clear division of responsibilities in the crisis between government, local governments and NGOs
 - Ensuring information security
7. Thinking now about the entire Warsaw metropolis, what will have the greatest positive impact on the preparation of the Warsaw metropolis for future waves of immigrants? (Max. 3 items.)
- Legislative actions of the government
 - Organizational activities and coordination of activities at the central level
 - Financial strength of local governments
 - Organizational activities and coordination of activities at the voivodeship government level
 - Organizational activities and coordination of activities at the local level
 - Activity of large domestic non-governmental organizations
 - Activity of local non-governmental organizations
 - Volunteer activity
 - Activity of citizens and society
 - Support and cooperation from the private sector
 - Financial support from the European Union
 - Other